



Rochester Birding  
Association

# Little Gull



A beautiful shot of a Northern Cardinal in Mendon Ponds this winter. Photo by Alan Bloom.

## JAN 2025 FIELD TRIPS



Leaders and trip details are subject to change. Please check the most recent issue of the Little Gull, or the online schedule at the RBA website [rochesterbirding.org](http://rochesterbirding.org), for updated information prior to departure! All field trips go rain/snow or shine unless there is a travel advisory issued. Trips run approximately 2 to 4 hours. Bring binoculars. Wear weather appropriate clothing and sturdy shoes. Registration is not required, please arrive at the designated meeting location 10 minutes before the start time of the trip. Colds, flu, and COVID are still around—if you're not feeling well, please stay home. Please carpool when possible. Enjoy your trip!

JAN 1  
Wednesday

### IRONDEQUOIT BAY OUTLET AND DURAND-EASTMAN PARK YEAR LIST JUMP-START

Get started on your annual list! We'll look for winter waterfowl on the Bay, then move to Durand-Eastman Park where we will stroll Log Cabin Road and Zoo Road looking for finches, waxwings, and resident birds. This trip is mostly on paved roads. No restrooms available. Meet at **8:00 a.m.** in the large parking lot next to the Outlet bridge, on the west side of Irondequoit Bay Outlet (Irondequoit Bay State Marine Park). **Dress warmly!** **Spotting scopes would be very useful.**

**Leaders:** Norma Platt and John Boettcher 585-671-9639



Sharp-shinned Hawks have been spotted at Durand Eastman Park in the past. This one was photographed by Dick Horsey in December of 2023.

Field Trips continue on [page 4](#)

## Moving On

The third year of my two-year term as RBA president ends on February 2, when RBA celebrates its 50th anniversary and you vote in the new slate of officers. Brian Rohrs, my extremely capable friend and our treasurer for the last decade, will move into the president role.

I am very, very grateful for the hard work that the 2024 nominating committee did to get us such a capable slate (see the list in this issue).

People throughout our organization have many commitments as volunteers for nonprofit organizations throughout the Monroe County area, so it was a feat of incredible perseverance to find these new officers for RBA. Many thanks to Dominic Sherony, Liz Magnanti, and Lisa Talpey for their work.

When I came on as president, I had several specific tasks I hoped to complete. We had a capital fund full of well-invested cash that just sat and grew since we received it in 1989, and a community that had projects in mind to bring us more access to birds and birding. My goal was to unite that fund and those projects, and we have indeed done so. For example, if you have not yet visited the new, accessible viewing platform at Genesee Land Trust's Salmon Creek Nature Preserve, I highly recommend that you do, especially in spring when the meadow fills with grassland birds. This and other projects have benefited from the funds we are now able to spread into the community.

We had other challenges as well. Several of our committee chairs had served for a decade or more and needed respite. Our website's software had become obsolete and required a full replacement. And we had started running hybrid membership meetings with in-person and Zoom components, requiring us to keep a wide range of technical variables in line.

Over the last three years, we have resolved these issues, making certain that RBA's offerings to its members provide a high level of value and accessibility. We hired a technical expert to handle the technology at our membership meetings. We have new committee chairs who have energized their functions within the organization: Nick Kachala as Records Committee chair, Dan Hosek as Little Gull editor and graphic artist, Andrew Romanowski as Last 30 Days Gallery chair, Niki Banke as Social Committee chair, Chad Lewine as webmaster, Nic Minetor organizing Birds & Brews events, and Neal Reilly leading Young Birders field trips. In the new year, Jo Taylor will step down as Membership chair after many years, ceding that responsibility to Doug Rabjohns.

We also continue to depend on the talent of our ongoing committee chairs: Sheryl Gracewski leading Circulation, Liz Magnanti heading Communications, Jeanne Verhulst leading her ever-dependable Field Trips committee, Kevin Farrell handling Item Sales, and Shelley Patterson tirelessly serving as Web Content Manager.

I cannot say enough about the wonderful 2024 board who worked with me to get all of these things accomplished. To David Laiacona, who has programmed our 2024 and entire 2025 slate of speakers in advance; Lisa Talpey stepping in as acting secretary; Brian's aforementioned skill as treasurer; Liz Magnanti as immediate past president for a year longer than she intended; directors Lynn Bergmeyer, Kevin Farrell, Wanda Thistle, and Robert Buckert; I am so grateful for your input and willingness to pick up wherever you spotted slack. What an extraordinary experience it has been working with all of you.

On to the next. Goodbye, good luck, and above all, good birding.



Photo by Nic Minetor

# NEW MEMBERSHIP LEVELS GO INTO EFFECT JANUARY 1

New members and current members who renew their membership after January 1, 2025 will see new rates in effect. This is the first membership rate increase in about 15 years! You can still renew online at our website, [rochesterbirding.org](http://rochesterbirding.org), or by using the mail-in form you may have received in late December.

While we still rely on our wonderful volunteers to help run our organization, our operating costs have increased over the past several years due to a number of factors:

- **We hired a professional for the Little Gull layout and publishing**
- **We have a webmaster helping with significant changes to our website, updating all the embedded applications and generally keeping our website functional**
- **We hired an AV tech who supports the set up, streaming and recording of our speaker programs**
- **We have increased costs in rental space, our post office box, mailing costs, and other administrative activities**

All told, our annual operating costs have increased by a little over \$6000/yr from where they were 3-4 years ago. This works out to a little over \$15 more per membership. Rather than increasing all membership dues by that much, the board decided that keeping a lower cost option is important for our members with the understanding that those with greater means might decide to give a higher amount.

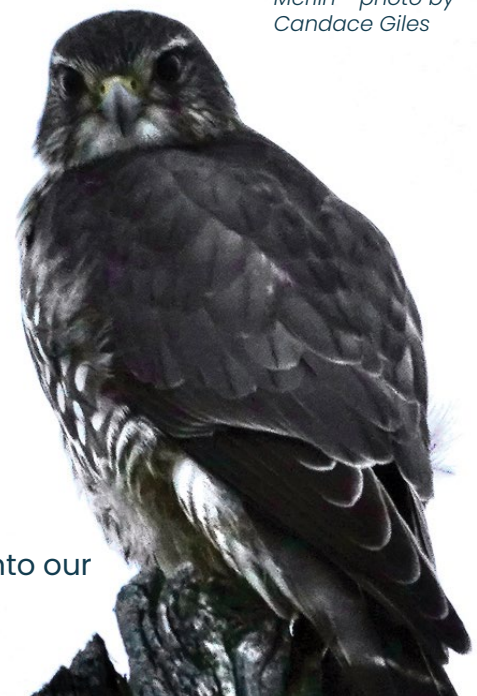
Therefore, to cover increased operating costs, the Board of Directors has approved a new membership dues structure for 2025. An individual membership will be increased only \$5 to \$30/year. For households with more than one member, a family membership will be \$40/year. For those members who have the means and inclination for a higher level of support, we have structured two additional levels: a supporter level of \$75 and a sponsor level of \$150. Our Corporate Sponsor level will remain at \$250.

Level	2025 Membership Dues
Friend-Individual	\$30
Friend-Family	\$40
Supporter Level	\$75
Sponsor Level	\$150
Corporate Sponsor	\$250

If a member wishes to get a paper copy of the Little Gull, the cost will remain at an additional \$15 to defray the cost of printing and mailing.

We have always had a generous membership, and we hope that this new dues structure will allow us to cover our operating costs so we can continue to provide the educational programming, field trips and community outreach. Additionally, please note that any amount given above a membership level as a charitable donation will be funneled into our Capital Account to support our Access to Birds and Birding initiatives.

Merlin - photo by Candace Giles





# FIELD TRIPS

**JAN 4**  
Saturday

## WEBSTER PARK – CAMPGROUND AREA

In mature forest and scrubby areas we'll look for overwintering resident birds, lingering migrants such as Hermit Thrush and special winter visitors such as Evening and Pine Grosbeaks, White-winged and Red Crossbills and Bohemian Waxwings. This is a mostly level walk, partly on dirt road, partly on wooded dirt trail that can be uneven in places. Wear boots with good traction, and dress warmly as we may be outside for 2-3 hours, although you are free to leave at any time. Trip length will depend upon trail and weather conditions. No rest rooms available. Meet at **8:00 a.m.** in the parking lot on the south side of Lake Road across from Kanatota Lodge.

**Leaders:** Rosemary Reilly 585-748-0802 and co-leader Pat Martin 585-301-5485

**JAN 11**  
Saturday

## BEGINNER BIRDER TRIP – MENDON PONDS PARK SONGBIRD TRAIL

This trip will be a leisurely winter walk along rolling trails (approx. 1.5 miles) featuring some very close looks at our winter passerines! Bring your binoculars, some sunflower seeds, and your camera! This is a family-friendly field trip. Meet at **9:30 a.m.** at the visitor center on Pond Road near Clover Street. Restroom is available at the visitor center or port-a-john.

**Leaders:** John Boettcher 585-671-9639 and co-leader Ann McMican 585-533-1222



**JAN 19**  
Sunday

## NATIONS ROAD AREA

We'll search Nations Road area of Avon and southward toward Geneseo to Huston Road, looking for Northern Shrikes, hawks, Snow Buntings, Horned Larks, and other birds of the fields and farmland in winter. We'll be mostly driving, but will be getting out of the car at frequent stops along the road. Dress for the weather. Meet at **2:00 p.m.** at Tops Plaza (restroom) in Avon on Routes 5 and 20, two miles west of I-390. Please carpool from Tops, if possible! **Spotting scopes would be very useful.**

**Leaders:** Jim Kimball 585-519-9211 and co-leader Rick Stevens 585-425-7849

**JAN 26**  
Sunday

## LAKESHORE PLAINS WEST

A driving tour of the farm fields and open lands to the west of Rochester, this trip will search for Horned Larks, Snow Buntings, Lapland Longspurs, Northern Shrikes, falcons (possible Merlin or Peregrine) and hawks (hoping for Rough-legged and Northern Harriers) in western Monroe and possibly into Orleans County. **Dress warmly** in layers; bring snacks (lunch if you wish to continue on into the early afternoon with us) and a thermos filled with a warm beverage. We will drive along backcountry roads for a few hours, stopping where we see bird activity. No restrooms available until we reach Hamlin Beach SP. Meet at **9:00 a.m.** at the Braddock Bay Park main parking lot. Use the East Manitou Road exit from the Ontario State Parkway. Plan on coordinating carpooling, if possible, as this is a driving tour. Fewer cars are better as we pull over on roads potentially with snow banks. **If possible, bring your own FRS radios and spotting scopes.**

**Leaders:** Lynn Bergmeyer 585-576-0422 and co-leader Robert Buckert 585-269-4206



So we can bring you a



Special Event!

Rochester Birding Association

50th Anniversary Dinner Celebration

Sunday, February 2, 2024  
5:00 – 8:00 p.m.

5:00 p.m. – Reception with cash bar

6:00 p.m. – Dinner

6:45 p.m. – Dessert and Program



Northern Shrike at Burger Park by Alan Bloom

RIT Inn and Conference Center • 5257 West Henrietta Road, Henrietta

The dinner is free of charge, but registration is required by January 15 at <https://rochesterbirding.org/rba-50th-anniversary-dinner>

## WELCOME TO THE FLOCK

Join us in welcoming these new members who joined over the last month.

Elizabeth Cornish

Phillip Palumbo

Kalon Hale

Terry Quataert

Wendelin & Honor'a Long

As of November 15, total membership is 403

384 Household memberships

1 Junior member

1 Corporate member (The Bird House)

24 Complimentary

Jo Taylor, RBA Membership Data



A huge flock of Snow Geese take flight in Waterloo, December 2024. Photo by Eunice Thein.



## Trip around Conesus Lake December 7, 2024

A small, but hearty group (4) showed up at Vital Park for the annual December trip around the lake led by Nick Kachala and Jim Kimball. It was in the 20s with snow on the ground and light snow in the air. Duck hunters were out, with several flocks of decoys and numbers of ducks and gulls flushed up with gun shots. Nevertheless, we had a good birding day with 46 species in all. The most numerous, as expected on Conesus this time of year, were Redheads, both on the lake in rafts and then in flight as put up by hunters in boats. We had 194 Tundra Swans in all, most easily seen from Vitale parks; in the same area were the first of several Ruddy Ducks and Coots, among others—also as has become a regular on these trips, a Merlin perched up near the parking area. Less common or unexpected species included a Harrier, flying out over the lake, a pair of Long-tailed Ducks, 4 Pied-Billed Grebes, and an out-of-season Ruby-crowned Kinglet (at the Sliker Hill Rd. dike parking area.) Cold, but we had a good trip.

**Jim Kimball**

## Nations Road December 10, 2024

The Nations Road trip began on a beautiful December day. Temperatures were in the 40s with no snow or rain, just overcast and breezy! Twenty-nine eager birders included new birders, familiar faces, a few teenagers, at least 10 Buffalonians and one local from right in the Nations Road area! On Route 39 there were Red-tailed Hawks, an American Kestrel, and the first of several Bald Eagles for the trip. At Wheelers Gully the group was treated to great looks at a Northern Mockingbird, Blue Jays, Northern Cardinals, Red-bellied Woodpecker, and flyover groups of Ring-billed Gulls. As we were readying to move, a few birders noticed some low flying larger birds in the fields at the top of the hill. The group moved around the



*This Short-eared Owl was seen on a previous trip to Nations Road. Photo by Eunice Thein.*

corner just south of Roots Tavern Road. To our surprise in the fields were six Short-eared Owls and three Northern Harriers (including a Grey Ghost!) Every one in our group got incredible looks at the owls in flight and perched. Many witnessed a bit of action between a Short-eared and a Sharp-shinned Hawk! Both the harriers and the owls were hunting. Several birders witnessed both species dropping down into snow patches or grass in search of rodents. In the trees were two adult Bald Eagles and two juveniles. Further north on Nations Road many saw a perched Short-eared on a fencepost. Turning onto Oxbow Lane we discovered another Short-eared and another adult Bald Eagle flew by. Oxbow Lane can be very birdy, but the snow had melted so the field birds had gone elsewhere. We refound the Short-eared flying low hunting and a few of us heard the owl give call notes. The group took some time to chat and have cookies. Flocks of Canada Geese and a surprise group of American Robins flew by. Returning to Nations Road we found three Short-eareds hunting. A few birders reported later that another three Short-eareds were also seen on Huston Road. What luck with an afternoon full of raptors and a fun group! Short-eared Owl was a life bird for about half of the group! Hope to see you all outside soon.

**Niki Banke and Neal Reilly**



# AUGUST 2024 RECORDS SUMMARY

August 2024 finally broke the incredible monthly above-average warmth that had been over upstate New York since November 2023. This month, temperatures averaged 70.9°F, 0.2° above average. All months since November 2023 have had monthly averages significantly above average. For this August, 13 days had temperatures below normal, which included a strong cold front that moved through on 20–21 August. Precipitation totaled 3.53", 0.22" above average. Three days had daily rainfall totals over 0.5". The remnants of Hurricane Debby passed through New York on 9 August, causing heavy flooding to the upper Genesee Valley and southern Finger Lakes. Besides an inch of rain that fell on 18–19 August and the cold front, the weather was overall pleasant.

As usual, evidence of fall migration picked up as seen by increases in shorebirds (27 species reported) and the first consistent fall warblers (26 species reported). The month saw several rare shorebirds and some rare waders, each of which will be discussed in subsequent sections. The eBird download came in just under 35,750, up 3.4% from 2023.

The diversity and abundance of waterfowl increased throughout the month, as expected, with several species of dabblers increasing in numbers as the month progressed. These growing flocks of dabblers were mainly concentrated around the Braddock Bay area and the Northern Montezuma WMA (NMWMA). Early migrant diving ducks (*aythya* species and scoters) were all but absent besides a single report of Ring-necked Duck from the Lakeshore in Greece.

Once again, the maximum counts for Common Gallinule (50), American Coot (60), and Pied-billed Grebe (15) came from the Sandhill Crane Unit (VanDyne Spoor Road) in the NMWMA. The first Red-necked Grebe of the fall passed the Hamlin Beach SP Lakewatch on 13 August. Andy Guthrie reported a handful of Common Loons throughout the month and a single Red-throated Loon on 13 August. Sandhill Cranes were reported throughout the NMWMA, with a maximum count of 21 appearing on 17 August.

Wood Storks made a northward push this season. Reports surfaced left and right in neighboring states,

leaving Region 2 birders wondering when we would get our share. Sure enough, Steve Bremner reported five immature **WOOD STORKS** from Braddock Bay's West Spit Parking Lot on 18 August, seen by many. Two immature **WOOD STORKS** were reported from the Pratt Road Transient Pond shorebird hotspot in Sodus, and two (perhaps the same as Pratt Road) at Sodus Point on 20 August. Another immature **WOOD STORK** visited a private pond in Spencerport for a few days around the same time. The last immature



Two juvenile Wood Storks spotted at Braddock Bay West Spit by Doug Rabjohns on August 18, 2024.

**WOOD STORK** of the month was found along a small creek on English Road in the Town of Greece, also seen by many. Another wader surprise came on 15 August when Emma Jefferson photographed a **WHITE IBIS** at Maxwell Bay near Beechwood SP. The bird flew west shortly after being photographed. One of the Glossy Ibises summering in Montezuma finally crossed over into Region 2 on 13 August (Sandhill Crane Unit) and was periodically seen thereafter.

Water levels on Lake Ontario started August at 245.96" and finished at 245.64." Despite being about six inches lower than 2023, accessing the shorebird habitat around Braddock Bay still meant

# AUGUST 2024 RECORDS SUMMARY

getting wet legs while wading over to the East Spit island. Nonetheless, observers tallied 27 species of shorebird for the month. Four different Upland Sandpipers stood out: one at Pratt Road Transient Pond (3 August, Pat Martin); one at Irondequoit Bay Outlet (5 August, Nike Ukens); one at Sodus Point (25 August, Rich Hanlon); and one at Ontario Beach and Charlotte Pier (28 August, Roger Clark). Sodus Point hosted high counts of Whimbrel (33 on 18 August and 24 on 19 August). Mike Gullo reported a



Hudsonian Godwit from Sodus Point on 18 August. Mike Gullo then reported a flock of 57 Hudsonian Godwits passing Sodus Point on 19 August. Two Marbled Godwits were reported from the East Spit: the first by Austin Groff on 2 August and the second on 18 August by Erika and Brady Venniro. Observers reported five Willets as well from locations including the East Spit, Charlotte Pier, and Sodus Point. Kyle Gage found three Red-necked Phalaropes on the south end of Hemlock Lake on 21-23 August. Mike Gullo reported a single Buff-breasted Sandpiper along Lakeshore Road in the town of Sodus on 28 August. The bird was seen by many and reported through the end of the month. Shorebird hotspots such as the East Spit, Charlotte Pier, Sodus Point, Pratt Road, and habitat throughout the NMWMA reported good numbers of more common shorebirds as well throughout the month, with numbers building toward the end.

The past few years have seen Parasitic Jaegers arrive in the last two weeks of August, trending earlier than the historic records. However, there were no reports of Parasitic Jaegers this August. Among the gulls, numbers of Ring-billed Gulls and Herring Gulls remained lower along the Lake Ontario shoreline, as expected for August. Three different Lesser Black-backed Gulls were reported (an adult, a first summer, and a second summer). Observers

reported all four terns. Capsian Tern numbers peaked at 50, seemingly low, from Braddock Bay. Forster's Tern reports came from a single bird on Braddock Bay on 8 August and another single bird on Hemlock Lake on 18 August.

Braddock Bay Raptor Research (BBRR) once again conducted a post-natal dispersal fall raptor count from the Braddock Bay Hawkwatch. With August falling entirely within the count window, the volunteer-staffed effort tallied 2,317 raptors for the month. Dispersing Red-tailed Hawks composed the majority (1,758) of the raptors, and are the focus of the count, but all migrant raptors were recorded. Days of good movement include 4 August (158 raptors), 15 August (249 raptors), 18 August (250 raptors), and 27 August (487 raptors). In addition to Red-tailed Hawks, the count tallied 119 Bald Eagles and 205 Broad-winged Hawks.

Rounding out with the passerines, nothing rare at all was reported. Neotropical migrants returned on their way south, with some new species arriving and more consistent and abundant numbers of the species that arrived in July. Observers reported four different Olive-sided Flycatchers. The Acadian Flycatcher at Hamlin Beach SP was present throughout the month, like 2023. Red-headed Woodpeckers were found at four different sites (Durand-Eastman



Park, Hamlin Beach SP, Webster Park, and Whiting Road Nature Preserve). Swallow numbers seemed down from recent years, with high counts of Bank Swallow (540), Tree Swallow (1,500), Purple Martin (150), and Northern Rough-winged Swallow (100) appearing low, especially given how massive the flocks of swallows over the NMWMA can get before



# AUGUST 2024 RECORDS SUMMARY



American Pipit seen at Braddock Bay East Spit by Eunice Thien.

Brandt, Janet & Scott Brooks, David Brown, Robert G. Buckert, Sara Burch, Brad Carlson, Robert Cicotta,, Roger Clark, Sara Close, Kelly Close, Lorenzo Colantoni, Andrew Consler, Robert Crandall, Doug Daniels, Rod Davis, Jayne Dean, Cliff Dekdebrun, Peggy Dempsey, Diane Egan, Adam Farid, Kevin Farrell, Rob Fergus, Annabelle Foos, George & Katie Ford, Kyle Gage, Dan Gallagher, Andrew Garland, Matthew Gavette, Janis George, Candy Giles, James Goetz, John & Karla Gordinier, Sheryl Gracewski, Jay Greenberg, Kevin Griffith, Austin Groff, Lucretia Grosshans, Michael Gullo, Carmen Gumina, Andrew Guthrie, Bill Haake, Kim Hartquist, Jim & Allison Healy, Christina Hoh, Dick Horsey, Bill Howe, Pam Inzinna, Carolyn Jacobs, Nick Kachala, Amy Kahn, Laura Kammermeier, Ryan Kayhart, David Kennedy, James Kimball, Cindy Kindle, Hans Kunze, Michael Laird, Chris Lajewski, Greg Lawrence, Fred Leff, Tim Lenz, Joan Lindberg, Peggy Mabb, Peggy Macres, Liz Magnanti, Melissa Mance-Coniglio, Patricia Martin, Lauri Mattle, Chita McKinney, Ann McMican, Scott Meagher, Jim Miles, Mark Miller, Kent Millham, Phil Mills, Celeste Morien, Brian & Brooke Morse, Jim Mott, Matt Nusstein, Dave Nutter, David Odell, Gabriella Orfanides, Andrea Patterson, Shelley Patterson, Jeremy Pete, Luanne Pignataro, Norma Platt, Jay Powell, Derek Pulhamus, Doug & Elizabeth Rabjohns, Neal Reilly, Rosemary Reilly, Michael Rizzo, Isaac Rizzo, Chris Rockwell, Brian Rohrs, Andrew Romanowski, Wade & Melissa Rowley, Shawn Ryan, Jennifer Rycenga, Anne Salverda, Greg & Shannon Sanda, Karl Schmidt, Shirley Shaw, Dominic Sherony, Rob Sielaff, Robert & Susan Spahn, Dave & Donna Spier, Kim Steininger, Rick Stevens, Reuben Stoltzfus, Kimberly Sucy, Michael & Joann Tetlow, Eunice Thien, Nathan Ukens, Tom & Jeanne Verhulst, Mike Wasilco, Bridget Watts, Kim Weeks, Tom & Eileen Wheeler, Joe Wing, Chris Wood, Jim Wood, Ryan Zucker (there were 436 observers who submitted to eBird).

dispersal. The first American Pipit of the fall arrived on 28 August. White-throated Sparrows appeared towards the end of the month, mostly into Wayne County, slightly early – perhaps some summering birds or wanderers from breeding sites further east in the state. Of note, Grasshopper Sparrow and Clay-colored Sparrow were missed for the month. No rare warblers were reported. The Braddock Bay Banding Station (BBBO) commenced the fall banding season on 15 August. No rare birds were banded, and no counts stood out as unusually high or unusually low.

Please submit reports to eBird, post them on [geneseebirds](http://geneseebirds.com), and/or send by the 5th of the month to Nick Kachala, [nicholaskach@gmail.com](mailto:nicholaskach@gmail.com). 1141 Rush-Scottsville Rd., Rush, NY 14543

**Observers:** Janet Akin, Osvaldo Araya, Richard Ashworth, Diane Baillargeon, Ryan Ballard, Niki Banke, Tanya Baranov, Ted Barnett, Mitchell Barry, Jessie Barry, Betty Beckham, Don Bemont, Steven & Linda Benedict, Lynn Bergmeyer, Shawn Billerman, Linda Birkel, Robin Blakesley, Alan & Lisa Bloom, John Boettcher, Terry Bohling, Lynn Braband, Christopher

Red-headed Woodpecker at Durand-Eastman Park. Photo by Eunice Thien.



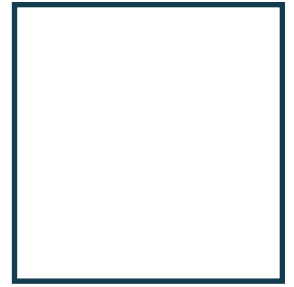
	2024	2023	10-year Average (2014-2023)
Total species for August	202	208	202.3
New species for the year	5	2	4.9
Total for the year to date	286	283	278.9





# Rochester Birding Association

P.O. Box 92055  
1335 Jefferson Road  
Rochester, NY 14692-9998



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## Address Service Requested

### 2024 RBA BOARD OF DIRECTORS

<b>President</b>	Randi Minetor	witerrandi@gmail.com
<b>Vice President</b>	David Laiacona	dlaiacona@live.com
<b>Treasurer</b>	Brian Rohrs	treasurer@rochesterbirding.org
<b>Secretary (acting)</b>	Lisa Talpey	lisa.talpey@gmail.com
<b>Past President</b>	Liz Magnanti	lizmagnanti@gmail.com
<b>Director</b>	Kevin Farrell	kmfarrell18@gmail.com
<b>Director</b>	Lynn Bergmeyer	lynnbergmeyer@gmail.com
<b>Director</b>	Wanda Thistle	thistlew@yahoo.com

### RBA COMMITTEE CHAIRS

<b>Birds &amp; Brews</b>	Nic Minetor	nic@minetor.com
<b>Circulation</b>	Sheryl Gracewski	grace@me.rochester.edu
<b>Communication</b>	Liz Magnanti	lizmagnanti@gmail.com
<b>Conservation</b>	<i>Vacant</i>	
<b>Little Gull Editor/Artist</b>	Dan Hosek	editor@rochesterbirding.org
<b>Field Trips</b>	Jeanne Verhulst	Jeanne.verhulst@gmail.com
<b>Item Sales</b>	Kevin Farrell	kmfarrell18@gmail.com
<b>Last 30 Days Gallery</b>	Andrew Romanowski	andyromo7@gmail.com
<b>Member Data</b>	Jo Taylor	jhtaylor@frontiernet.net
<b>Nominating</b>	Dominic Sherony	dsherony@live.com
<b>Records</b>	Nicholas Kachala	nicholaskach@gmail.com
<b>Social</b>	Niki Banke	jacksons.mama@hotmail.com
<b>Volunteer Coordinator</b>	<i>Vacant</i>	
<b>Web Content Manager</b>	Shelley Patterson	shelpat22@gmail.com
<b>Webmaster</b>	Chad Lewine	chad@chadlewine.co
<b>Young Birders</b>	Neal Reilly	Neal.f.reilly@gmail.com